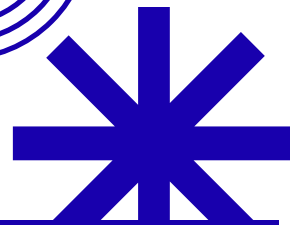


'Rider News



April 2026

Mr. Billeter, Superintendent

Dear Roughrider Nation,

As we move into the spring season, there is a great deal of excitement and activity taking place across our district. This is an important time of year for both academic progress and student involvement, and we appreciate your continued support in helping our students succeed both in and out of the classroom. It is always a great time to be a part of Southwest Public Schools—#RollRiders!

Beginning March 31st, students in grades 3 through 8 will participate in the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) in Reading and Math, with students in grades 5 and 8 also completing Science assessments. These state assessments are an important tool used to measure academic achievement and growth, while also helping guide instruction and support student learning. A detailed testing schedule will be shared with students and posted on our website and social media platforms. We ask that you help ensure your child is present, well-rested, and prepared to give their best effort, as a positive mindset and strong attendance play a key role in student success during testing.

Spring is one of the busiest and most exciting times of the school year, with a full calendar of athletic events, activities, field trips, meets, and concerts. This time of year also brings special milestones, including music concerts and graduation, as we celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of our students. We encourage families to stay connected and informed by regularly checking our school calendar and following Southwest Public Schools on social media for updates and highlights. It is always a great time to celebrate the many successes of our students and staff.

We also encourage families to stay actively engaged in their student's academic progress by utilizing Infinite Campus. This platform allows you to monitor grades, attendance, and lunch balances in real time. For added convenience, families now have the ability to pay lunch balances directly through Infinite Campus, making it easier than ever to stay up to date

Please note that there will be no school on Friday, April 3rd, and Monday, April 6th in observance of Good Friday and the Easter holiday. We hope this extended weekend provides an opportunity for rest, family time, and reflection.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Southwest Public Schools. Together, we remain committed to providing educational opportunities for all students and ensuring each child is set up for success. #RollRider



Mrs. Fries, Principal

Celebrations from March & Looking Ahead to April

March flew by so quickly! It's hard to believe how fast the school year is passing. The month was filled with exciting events and meaningful celebrations.

Our 5th-grade students traveled to Curtis for Farm Safety Day, where they gained valuable knowledge about staying safe in agricultural settings and being aware of their surroundings. It was both an educational and memorable experience.

We also celebrated Read Across America Week and Dr. Seuss's birthday! Students engaged in a variety of activities that promoted a love of reading and highlighted many favorite books and authors. It was truly a week full of literacy and fun!

To wrap up our reading celebration, we hosted our Family Literacy Night on March 26th. The evening was packed with engaging activities, including the Scholastic Book Fair, Book Bingo, a Book Walk, a Photo Booth, and a special guest storyteller. The Nebraska Extension Agency also provided a wonderful shadow presentation in which students created shadow puppets and characters to bring stories to life.

We wrapped up March with Kindergarten Orientation on March 30th, where families learned about the transition from preschool to kindergarten. Students had the opportunity to meet their teachers and participate in fun activities that helped build excitement for the upcoming school year.

April promises to be another busy and exciting month! Students will be completing MAP Growth assessments and NSCAS state assessments. These assessments provide important information about student learning and growth. MAP Growth is given multiple times throughout the year and helps us measure individual student progress, identify strengths, and guide instruction to meet each child's needs. NSCAS is Nebraska's statewide assessment and measures how well students are meeting state standards in key academic areas. Together, these assessments help teachers make informed instructional decisions, ensure students are receiving the support they need, and allow our school and district to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We encourage students to do their best and approach these assessments with confidence, knowing they are an opportunity to show what they have learned.

In addition, we have field trips, music contest preparations, and many enriching learning opportunities ahead.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for your continued partnership and support. Thank you for being such an important part of our school community!

Warm regards,
Tara Fries
Elementary Principal





Important Dates to Remember:

- April 3 & 6 – No School (Easter Holiday)
- April 15– Good Friends Celebration
- April 20 – Elementary Spring Music Concert
- April 22 – 5th Grade Transition Day at Jr./Sr. High
- April 24 – Kindergarten Field Trip to McCook (4-H Building)
- April 29 – Preschool Field Trip to the Children’s Museum in Kearney
- April 30 –
 - 3rd Grade Outdoor Education Day (McCook)
 - 4th Grade Field Trip to Stuhr Museum (Grand Island)

Payton Schake,
Counselor's Corner

Seniors:

Scholarships:
Click the Google link.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tUvMVTpzKq3umtYJmzwmBM64aNEs60AOFPMJARU_jQ/edit?gid=0#gid=0

*The spreadsheet is organized by monthly due dates, so be sure to look at the months in advance, so you have time to fill out the applications before the due date. This is updated as I receive scholarships throughout the year.

*The scholarships highlighted in red are not updated, and the scholarships highlighted in green are always open and have differing due dates, so be sure to look back on these frequently

FAFSA:

Reminder to ALL seniors, as of this year the State of Nebraska requires the FAFSA to be completed before you graduate (it is a graduation requirement). If you plan on not attending college or do not plan on using student loans to pay for college you MUST fill out an exemption form before graduation. These forms are found in Mr. Schake's office.

ACT

Register for the ACT at: actstudent.org

Southwest School Code: 280151

MCC Test Site Code: 024600 (paper test only)

Test Dates	Registration Dates	(Late Fee Registration)
June 13, 2026	May 9	May 29
July 11, 2026	June 5	June 24

ACT Costs

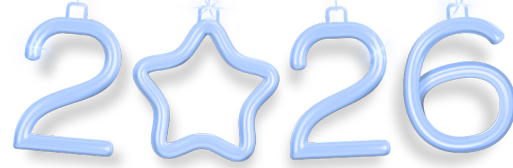
ACT Test: \$68.00

Writing Section Add-on: \$25.00

Science Section Add-on: \$4.00

Sophomores:

You will be taking the Pre-ACT April 13th for the first half of school. It will be at no cost to the student and will be online. This is used to help test where students' knowledge is prior to the ACT, as well as to give students the opportunity to see how the ACT will feel.



April Counselor's Corner

It is hard to believe we are in the final stretch of the school year! April will be a busy and exciting month as we begin preparing for end-of-year activities and transitions.

The Rockin' Riders are meeting for their final sessions of the school year and will be helping with several upcoming end-of-year events. I am proud of the leadership and enthusiasm this group of 5 th graders has shown throughout the year.

We also have an exciting update on the Southwest School Cookbook. Final touches are currently being completed, and we are thrilled to share that over 400 recipes were submitted. This far exceeded what we could have hoped for, and we are so grateful to everyone who contributed. At this time, Mrs. Hyke is working on implementing new online payment options, so the official kickoff for ordering is on hold until that is in place. Please be on the lookout for order forms coming home in the near future. Payment will be due at the time of ordering.

In the Enrichment classroom, students are continuing to build important social-emotional and life skills. Fourth grade students are beginning their career unit, where they will research a career of their choice and present their findings to their classmates. Fifth grade students are preparing for their transition to junior high, with classroom discussions focused on what to expect. They will also have the opportunity to visit the high school on April 22nd.

Our younger students have been hard at work as well. Second and third grade students are learning about emotional regulation using the Hand-Brain Model, helping them better understand their reactions and how to manage big emotions. Kindergarten and first grade students are exploring feelings through the Little Spots of Emotions, and they always enjoy meeting each new "spot" as it is introduced.

As we move further into spring, we will continue focusing on positive peer relationships, responsibility, and finishing the school year strong. This time of year can bring a mix of excitement and energy, and we will be working with students on maintaining routines, making good choices, and preparing for the transitions ahead.

**Board of Education Meeting
Southwest Public Schools
District 179
March 16, 2026**

President Neseth called the regular meeting of the Southwest Public Schools Board of Education to order at 6:31 p.m. on March 16, 2026, at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

Present: Jennifer McConville, Derek Meyers, Jason Neseth, Brooke Brooks, Duane Teter, John O'Dea Superintendent Drew Billeter, and Krista Kennedy.

Absent: None.

Visitors: Cris Charley and Hillery Kennedy

President Neseth observed Open Meeting Law requirements.

Moved by Teter, seconded by McConville, to approve the board meeting agenda as presented. Ayes: Meyers, McConville, Neseth, Teter, O'Dea and Brooks. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Notices of the meeting were posted at the Adams Bank and Trust in Indianola, the Stockmen's Bank Bartley Branch, Post Offices in Bartley and Indianola, Southwest Elementary School in Indianola, Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley, and published in the Valley Voice newspaper and on the school website. Notice of the meeting was given in advance to all members prior to the meeting date.

Moved by McConville, seconded by Brooks, to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2026, Board Meeting. Ayes: Teter, Brooks, Meyers, McConville, O'Dea and Neseth. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

**Moved by Teter, seconded by O'Dea, to approve the claims as presented. Ayes: McConville, Meyers, Brooks, Teter, O'Dea, and Neseth. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.
The treasurer's report was presented to the Board.**


Moved by O'Dea, seconded by McConville, to approve the resignation of Mrs. Chelsea Vogel. Ayes: O'Dea, Neseth, Brooks, Teter, Meyers, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Meyers, to approve the resignation of Mrs. Chelsea Santana. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Neseth, Brooks, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Meyers, to approve the principal contract for Mr. Mike Tines. Ayes: O'Dea, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, Teter, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by McConville, seconded by O'Dea, to approve the teaching contract for Mrs. Lesa Tines. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Brooks, to approve the teaching contract for Mrs. Laura Nokes. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.



Moved by Teter, seconded by O'Dea, to approve the teaching contract for Miss Joann Neel. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.



Moved by Teter, seconded by McConville, to approve selling the 1997 MCI coach bus. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Teter, to approve selling surplus items. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by McConville, seconded by Meyers, to approve purchasing 70 Chromebooks for 3 rd , 7 th , and 10 th graders using REAP funds. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Brooks, seconded by O'Dea, to approve quote from Unitech to refinish all 3 gym floors. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Teter, to approve the teaching contract for Mr. Brennan Jackson. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Teter, seconded by O'Dea, to approve the teaching contract for Miss Hannah Wassenburger. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, Meyers, Brooks, Neseth, and McConville. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Superintendent Billeter reported on the 2026 NRCSA Spring Conference he will attend, held in Kearney. NSCA State Testing will begin in the upcoming weeks for students. Class schedules are being worked on for the 2026-2027 school year. Kindergarten Orientation will be held on March 30, 2026.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Meyers, to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, McConville, Neseth, Meyers, and Brooks. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Agenda for meetings will be kept continually current and available for public inspection in the office of the Superintendent.

The next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.





IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

On Thursday, April 9th, 2026, at 3:40 PM, a meeting conducted by Southwest Public Schools will take place at the high school library in Bartley. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide an opportunity for parents who have parentally placed their child in an approved and/or accredited non-public school or exempt home school and representatives of non-public schools to participate in the development of a plan for providing special education services to children with disabilities who attend an approved and/or accredited non-public schools and exempt home schools which are within the Southwest Public School district for the 2026-2027 school year. Parents of a home-schooled child or a child attending a non-public school who has been or may be identified with a disability and attend an approved and/or accredited non-public school within the boundaries of Southwest Public Schools, are urged to attend. If you have further questions pertaining to this meeting, please contact John Hanson, Director of Special Education at (308) 345-2072.

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>“This institution is an equal opportunity provider”</p>			<p>1. Breakfast Bagel Lunch Taco/Burrito</p>	<p>2. Breakfast Sausage Biscuit & Cheese Lunch Grilled Cheese</p>	<p>3. **No School**</p>	<p>4.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>6. **No School**</p>	<p>7. Breakfast Cereal Lunch Ham & Cheese Roll-up</p>	<p>8. Breakfast Fruel Lunch Chicken Nuggets</p>	<p>9. Breakfast Churro Lunch Biscuits & Gravy</p>	<p>10. Breakfast Breakfast Pizza Lunch Mini Corn Dogs</p>	<p>11.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>13. Breakfast Oatmeal Round Lunch Breaded Pork Pattie</p>	<p>14. Breakfast Cereal Bar Lunch Goulash</p>	<p>15. Breakfast Pancake Sausage Stick Lunch Baked Potato Bar</p>	<p>16. Breakfast Waffles Lunch French Dip</p>	<p>17. Breakfast Cinn Toast Crunch Bar Lunch Chicken Alfredo</p>	<p>18.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>20. Breakfast Donut Lunch Grilled Hamburger/Cheese Burgers Monster Cookies</p>	<p>21. Breakfast Pop Tart Lunch Orange Chicken Cinnamon Rolls</p>	<p>22. Breakfast Choc Crescent Lunch Pepperoni Dip Sticks Peanut Butter Bars</p>	<p>23. Breakfast Yogurt & Granola Lunch Mac & Cheese Strawberry Short Cake</p>	<p>24. Breakfast Combo Bar Lunch Pizza Smach Cake</p>	<p>25.</p>
<p>26.</p>	<p>27. Breakfast Granola Bar Lunch Meatball Sub</p>	<p>28. Breakfast Rice Krispies Lunch Beefy Nachos</p>	<p>29. Breakfast Mini Cinnias Lunch Chicken Sandwich</p>	<p>30. Breakfast Muffin Lunch Spaghetti</p>		<p>**Menu Subject to Change **Salad Bar daily **Milk With all Meals</p>